

# UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FIFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT



Announcement 120718

<b>Position Title:</b>	<b>CJA Administrative Attorney                      CL 27</b>
<b>Location:</b>	<b>Circuit Mediation and Judicial Support Office, Fifth Circuit - New Orleans, Louisiana</b>
<b>Salary Range/Grade:</b>	<b>CL 27 (\$48,951 - \$79,617 per annum). The presumptive starting salary is \$61,218 for a person with appropriate work experience. A salary in excess of this figure would be considered only for a candidate with extraordinary, relevant experience or qualifications, and a salary history supporting such an offer.</b>
<b>Closing Date:</b>	<b>Applications will be considered as soon as received, and will continue to be considered until the position is filled. The United States Court of Appeals, Fifth Judicial Circuit, is an Equal Opportunity Employer.</b>

## **Overview:**

The Circuit Mediation and Judicial Support Office invites applications from qualified persons for the position of CJA Administrative Attorney. Under the supervision of the Chief Circuit Mediator, and working with the other members of the office, the CJA Administrative Attorney coordinates the court's Criminal Justice Act (CJA) voucher program, and plans and executes all of the case-related and other functions of that program.

## **Representative Duties:**

The principal requirement for the position is the ability to process, using computer database applications, vouchers for the payment of attorneys appointed under the CJA to represent indigent criminal defendants. See the addendum for an overview of the CJA voucher process. Other duties include: 1) preparing regular and *ad hoc* statistical reports; 2) providing procedural advice on CJA related subjects; 3) fielding inquiries about the CJA process, including inquiries from judges, chambers staff and other court personnel; 4) dealing with attorneys' inquiries about CJA vouchers and the status of their submissions; 5) communicating with attorneys when questions are raised about their vouchers; 6) attending to administrative tasks necessary for mediation program operations; and 7) completing special projects assigned by the Chief Circuit Mediator.

### **Qualifications and Requirements:**

A JD degree from an accredited law school in the United States or an equivalent degree from an institution elsewhere is required. Membership in the bar of a state or territory is not an absolute prerequisite, but the inability to pass a bar examination would very likely be disqualifying.

Applicants should be aware that the office has no secretarial or clerical employees, and the duties of the position include tasks that would not ordinarily be assigned to an attorney.

Preferred skills include:

1. Meticulous attention to detail, intelligent adherence to procedural requirements, the utmost judgment and discretion, and absolute compliance with the office's requirements of confidentiality.
2. Effective oral and written communication skills, including dealing with telephone inquiries and preparing, editing and proofreading reports and other documents, with attention to presentation, format, spelling, grammar, punctuation, and style.
3. Ability to interpret and apply statutes, rules, regulations and guidelines relevant to the duties required of the position.
4. Proficiency in the use of computer programs, including database and word processing applications, with sufficient keyboard skills to allow data entry to be accomplished quickly.
5. Initiative to prioritize workloads and effectively manage multiple and time-sensitive projects.
6. Ability to work harmoniously with senior administrative personnel within the court system.

### **Application Procedure:**

Qualified applicants must submit a cover letter, résumé, and salary history, via email with the required documentation as readily accessible attachments (WordPerfect, Word, or .pdf) to: [newvacancy@ca5.uscourts.gov](mailto:newvacancy@ca5.uscourts.gov)

or by mail to:

United States Court of Appeals, Fifth Circuit  
600 Camp Street, Room 229  
New Orleans, LA 70130  
Attn: Vikram Chandhok, Chief Circuit Mediator

or via fax to: (504) 310-7583

Submission by email is preferred.

Applications will be considered as soon as received, and will continue to be considered until the position is filled. Applicants should therefore submit applications as soon as possible, even if they are not immediately available to begin work.

**Information for Applicants:**

- Only qualified applicants who submit complete applications will be considered for this position.
- Applicants must be United States citizens or [otherwise eligible to work in the federal court system](#).
- The court provides reasonable accommodations to applicants with disabilities.
- Funding is not available to support interviewee travel or relocation expenses.
- The selected applicant must provide educational transcripts. A background investigation, including fingerprint and records check, will be conducted as a condition of employment.
- All employees of the Judiciary are “at will” employees in the excepted service.
- The position is subject to mandatory electronic funds transfer for payment of salary.
- The court reserves the right to modify the conditions of this job announcement, withdraw the job announcement, or fill the position, any of which actions may occur without any prior written or other notice.

**ADDENDUM: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION  
ON THE CJA VOUCHER PROCESS**

Under the Criminal Justice Act (CJA), private attorneys are appointed to represent indigent criminal defendants. The person in the posted position will be responsible for processing vouchers through which these attorneys are paid.

After an appeal is decided, the attorney submits an electronic voucher, setting out the hours worked and expenses incurred in the representation, and attaching detailed time sheets and documentation of expenses as required. This voucher must be carefully examined for compliance with the applicable regulations and policies, and appropriate adjustments made. Mathematical calculations must be verified, and additional relevant materials must be attached to prepare the voucher for substantive review. Payment of vouchers requesting amounts above certain specified limits require approval by a judge, and a memorandum for the judge must be prepared setting out an assessment of the claim for payment in the light of the attorney’s work product.

Vouchers for work in the district courts undergo a similar process there. However, if the amount exceeds the specified limits, the voucher must be sent to the Court of Appeals for approval by the Chief Judge, or a judge to whom this authority has been delegated. Each of these excess district court vouchers requires the preparation of a memorandum similar to the one described above, analyzing the claim for payment and outlining the work required of the attorney during the course of the proceedings.

The volume of submissions is high, and the workload is heavy. In a recent calendar year over 700 appellate vouchers and approximately 430 excess district court vouchers were submitted. Although the supervising attorney and the more senior attorneys in the office are always available for consultation, the position requires assuming responsibility for maintaining assigned workflow without over-the-shoulder supervision. Backlogs cannot be tolerated.

Regular communication with CJA-appointed attorneys is required – to answer general questions, to respond to inquiries about voucher status, and to allow attorneys to provide further information when questions are raised about the amounts requested. Periodic reports must be prepared for the court about the operations of the office, and there are sometimes requests for more detailed statistical analyses of particular aspects of the appointment and payment process.

The applicant should provide evidence of education and experience that demonstrates a high level of comfort in working with figures both manually and using software, with applying rules accurately and precisely, and with accepting the substantial responsibilities of the position. There is an important public relations aspect of communications with appointed attorneys, and skills in this area are also required.

## **EMPLOYEE BENEFITS**

Employees of the United States Courts are entitled to similar benefits as other federal government employees. They are not included in the government's civil service system, however. Benefits include:

### **HEALTH INSURANCE**

Employees may participate in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHB), and may choose from plans provided by several insurers. The government contributes up to 75% of the premium, depending on the plan selected.

### **DENTAL/VISION INSURANCE**

Employees may participate in the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP), which is a supplemental insurance program. Premiums are paid in full by the employee, however, the premium is deducted on a pre-tax basis.

### **LIFE INSURANCE**

Employees may participate in the Federal Employees Group Life Insurance Program (FEGLI).

### **FLEXIBLE SPENDING ACCOUNT**

Employees may set aside pre-tax money to cover certain health care and dependent care expenses.

### **LONG-TERM CARE INSURANCE**

Employees may participate in the Federal Judiciary Group LongTerm Care Program which covers such benefits as community-based care, nursing home care, hospice care and caregiver benefit. Spouses, parents, parents-in-law, grandparents, and grandparents-in-law are also eligible.

### **TIME IN SERVICE**

Time in service with other federal agencies and prior military service is credited for the purpose of computing employee leave and retirement benefits.

**RETIREMENT**

Employees contribute 8.45% of their salary toward a retirement plan under the Federal Employees Retirement System, to which the government also contributes. Of that 8.45%, 6.2% goes to social security, 1.45% goes to Medicare, and .8% goes to the FERS Basic Benefit Plan. Employees may also participate in a voluntary tax-deferred Thrift Savings Plan [similar to "401(k)" plans]. Benefits are generally available upon retirement at age 60 with 20 years of service or at an earlier age with 30 years of service. Reduced benefits may be available with fewer years of service.

**WITHIN-LEVEL SALARY INCREASES** Within each salary classification level there are 61 "steps." Based upon performance, employees are eligible for annual step increases, subject to the availability of funds.

**TRANSIT/PARKING SUBSIDY**

Subject to the availability of funds.